



For the past 13 years, with a world-class ensemble of musicians, dancers and singers from both sides of the Atlantic, *Tomáseen Foley's A Celtic Christmas* has played to packed concert halls and critical acclaim nationwide, recreating on stage the now-famous *Rambling House*, that remote cottage in the West of Ireland where the neighbors gather every year for a communal night before Christmas.

There, the rafters ring with fiery traditional music, Irish Christmas songs, riveting traditional dance and, of course, stories of life in the remote parish of *Teampall an Ghleanntáin*, Tomáseen's birthplace. The show invites its audience to come into that cottage, into that world, into that era, with us, and be our neighbors for the night.

Storytelling was once the most admired of all the Celtic arts, and *A Celtic Christmas* is unique in that it is the only nationally touring show that has storytelling at its center: around that center revolve the more-immediately recognized traditional Celtic arts of music, song and dance.



"When I was a child it was around the fireplaces of my neighbors' thatched cottages that I experienced the last remnants of the old communal way of life. The family was the center of the community then, and the community was the center of life itself, the shining axle around which the great wheel of the universe revolved. Stories, music, song and dance were the spokes of that slowly turning wheel."
Tomáseen



The Neighbors....The Cast



Tomáseen Foley: storyteller, director

Tomáseen was born on a small farm in the remote parish of Teampall an Ghleanntáin in the West of Ireland. Each year from Thanksgiving until Christmas Tomáseen Foley's *A Celtic Christmas* plays to critical acclaim and packed concert halls around the US. Tomáseen Foley's Irish Times tours throughout the remainder of the year. The Oregon Cabaret has developed a hit musical from his story *Parcel From America*. He has released two CDs: *Parcel From America*, and a live recording, *The Priest and the Acrobat*. www.tomaseenfoley.com



William Coulter: musical director, guitar, whistle

William is an internationally acclaimed master of the steel-string guitar. In 2005, he won a Grammy for a track he contributed to a solo guitar compilation of Henry Mancini tunes, called *Pink Guitar*. He has been performing and recording traditional Celtic and American folk music for 25 years. The most recent of his seven CDs on the Gourd Music label is the acclaimed solo album, *The Road Home*. www.williamcoulter.com



Marianne Knight: vocalist, the button accordion, wooden flute, whistles and bodhrán, World Champion level traditional Irish Dancer

Marianne comes from the rich traditional- music environment of Co. Mayo, in the west of Ireland. Hotpress Magazine says, 'Her clear, bright voice and crisp ornamentation make her one of the most exciting vocalists to come along in years.' In addition to her singing, she is a musician of renown on several instruments -- the button accordion, wooden flute, whistles and bodhrán. As an Irish dancer, she has won the American Nationals and Scottish Nationals, and competed with distinction in the British, Canadian, All-Ireland and World championships.



Brian Bigley: uilleann pipes, whistle, flute, Irish dance.

From the age of eight, Brian Bigley studied the traditional, rarely heard, uilleann pipes with Achill Island (Co. Mayo) piper Michael Kilbane -- with whom he also studied flute, whistle and low whistle. Brian has toured extensively throughout North America, Europe and the UK, has been guest artist with the Contemporary Youth Orchestra of Cleveland, and competed with distinction in the World Championships in Glasgow in 2002 and in Killarney in 2003.

www.brianbigleymusic.com

The Neighbors....The Cast



Marcus Donnelly: Irish dance □

From Ireland to Luxemburg, from Moscow to Paris, France and Paris, Texas, Marcus's leading performances (*Ragús*, *Rhythm of the Dance*, *Celtic Legends*, and most recently in the U.S. with *Celtic Crossroads*) have created one of the most exhilarating, truly creative Irish dancers performing today. Marcus competed with distinction in the All-Ireland and World Dance Championships before becoming a professional dancer at the age of sixteen. When he is not touring, he works with his own dance company, *Furious Feet*, in Galway, Ireland.



Kathleen Keane: fiddle and tin whistle

Kathleen Keane's virtuoso music -- fiddle and tin whistle -- is featured in *The Titanic*, *Backdraft*, *The Road to Perdition* and *The Cinderella Man*. Considered a child prodigy on the tin whistle, the *Chicago Tribune* nominated her as "one of the world's finest Celtic Fiddlers.". She studied Irish step dancing under Michael Flatley (*Riverdance*/ *Lord of the Dance*) and went on to become a champion Irish dancer.

Kathleen Keane



Katie Linnane: Irish fiddle / Irish dance

For six successive years (2000-2006) Katie Linnane competed with distinction in many of the major dance competitions throughout Ireland, England, Scotland, America and Canada - including the North American National Irish Dance Championship, the All-Ireland Oireachtas Rince Nah Éireann, British National Championships (2000), All-Scotland Championships (2003) and World Championships (2000-2006). At the age of eight, she took up the fiddle, inspired by her mother, musician Kathy Linnane, and taught by the legendary Willie Kelly, she went on to compete with great distinction both as a soloist and as part of a duet and a trio at the All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil NahÉireann - 2005.